

care of for life if they served a minimum of twenty years of active federal service.

Well, those military retirees served their time and expected the government to hold up its end of the bargain. They are now realizing that these were nothing more than empty promises. Those who served in the military did not let their country down in its time of need and we should not let military retirees down in theirs. It's time military retirees get what was promised to them and that's why I am introducing this legislation.

HONORING JUNE PINKNEY ROSS

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 3, 2001

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, today I salute and honor the indomitable June Pinkney Ross of Galveston, Texas.

I was recently honored to have contributed to the "Book of Letters" being presented next week to Ms. Ross in celebration of her twenty-seven year career as Executive Director of the Galveston County Community Action Council.

The residents of Galveston County, particularly the disenfranchised and the children who could not speak for themselves, have been well served by June Ross' unselfish acts of caring, sharing, kindness and understanding of their plight.

It is well known that June Ross will literally fight to the bitter end for the right thing, is bluntly and sometimes frighteningly honest about how to address the needs of the poor and does not mind sharing her unedited opinion on any subject that is placed on the table. We who know her and have been privileged to work with her always knew that we could count on her to go after grants for which her agency qualified and, once the money was received, to disburse it where it was most needed. I have enjoyed working with June Ross and always felt that she would make a fair assessment of any situation that she was confronted with and react accordingly.

My one regret during our relationship is that I never got a chance to sample her cooking. Ms. Ross' radio cooking class was quite successful and listeners would bombard the station for her recipes. I am sure that she approached that job with the same diligence and commitment that she has given to the State of Texas and Galveston County throughout the years. I want to also take this opportunity to let her know that I am grateful for her service to our great nation as a member of the United States Military.

Mr. Speaker, I salute June Ross for all she has done to make the community better (United Way, one of the original founders of Hospice) and hope she knows how much she is respected and loved.

CHIEF PHILLIP MARTIN—CHAMPION OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY

HON. TOM DeLAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 3, 2001

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce to the RECORD the following editorial

that appears in Indian Country Today. As the piece points out, Chief Phillip Martin of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has for more than a quarter of a century used the free market as a tool to better the lives of his fellow tribe members and neighbors.

Self-reliance and not government dependency is the secret to prosperity. But there is no need to tell Chief Martin that fact. He has lived his life promoting the economic vitality of his people and they have reaped the benefits of his progressive thinking. I salute Chief Martin for all he has done to further the cause of freedom—for his people and for our nation.

[From Indian Country Today, Dec. 27, 2000]

MISSISSIPPI CHOCTAWS: THE BENEFITS OF PEACE CHIEFS

If a people are going to strive to achieve economic prosperity, the reduction of conflict, the acceptance and understanding of peace, is a most useful strategy. Mutual understanding, common cause and unity of action become possible. Little ever improves from virulent conflict and nothing moves forward in war. Leadership with vision often works actively to reduce conflict while putting its major efforts toward the positive building of fair community governance and efficient enterprises. At this moment of shifting political climates, when the future of Native nations is clouded by uncertainties on the national level, it seems proper to salute a consistent peace chief, one who led his own people from severe poverty and obscurity to sustained prosperity and regional political prominence.

He is Phillip Martin, long-time chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. A man of great perseverance, the 75-year-old Martin has led and guided his 6,000-member Choctaw tribe since 1959. Periodically, yet consistently reelected to the tribe's highest office for more than 40 years, Phillip Martin is universally credited for the success of the Choctaw, who are well posed to enter the 21st century as a self-determined people. While other, more conflictive tribes have deepened their economic dependencies and allowed spirals of violence to weaken their body politic, the Mississippi Choctaws have built steadily for more than 30 years. A well-entrenched tradition remembers the attitude of historical chief, Pushmataha, who in 1811 reasoned against war with their neighbors while Tecumseh appealed to the Choctaw warriors to join his war parties. While he had been a great warrior as a young man, Pushmataha opted for peace as he aged as a chief.

While Tecumseh has come down through the history as the greater leader, and Pushmataha is the lesser known. Interestingly, the response of Pushmataha, who coolly analyzed the horrible suffering war would bring, was actually quite sophisticated and just as completely dedicated to the preservation and survival of his people. He pointed out how his own tribe had painstakingly worked out friendly relations with their white neighbors. Their relations were reciprocal and as a result, things were going well. To start killing their neighbors with whom they had such relations did not seem a good idea to Pushmataha, who kept his people out of the war and guided them for another 14 years.

Like Pushmataha, Phillip Martin came home from war to embark in a career that would build education and civic action and economic opportunity for his people. He was one of those from what has been called "the greatest generation." A World War II Air Force combat veteran who lost a brother in the war, Martin served in the military until 1955. When he returned home, his people had their pride and their language, but little

else. They were among the poorest sharecroppers in a poor state, acutely discriminated against. They were basically just holding on to a tribal base, having come through a very dark historical period as a people of color in a racially polarized South. Suffering from 80 percent unemployment, 90 percent lived in poverty and the tribe averaged a sixth-grade education.

Appreciably, Martin returned home of sound mind and character and applied himself to the betterment of his people through self-sufficient enterprise. Martin led an early flight to construct and operated the first high school on the reservation in 1963, beginning a trend that has seen consistent improvement in the educational level of the reservation population. He began the planning that would lay out a modern community infrastructure with good housing. He pursued and constructed an industrial park and after 10 years of chasing contracts, began a successful 20 years of economic growth. General Motors, Ford Motor Co., Oxford Speakers and other companies have located manufacturing plants in the Choctaw's 80-acre industrial park, which boasts 500,000 square feet of manufacturing space.

By 1994, the year when their enterprises diversified and accelerated with construction of a casino and entertainment center, the nation ran a total payroll topping \$84 million. It had sound management and was ready to take on the complexity of gaming. The nation's Chahta Enterprises is now one of the 10 top employers in Mississippi. Its entertainment complex receives more than 2.5 million visitors a year and the tribe has built more than 1,000 new houses, constructed a major hospital, schools, nursing home, shopping center and day care center.

In what used to be the poorest county in the poorest state in the United States, in one of the most conservative states in the union, the Choctaws led an economic revolution. Today, with nearly universal employment, only 2.7 percent of household income comes from social services and this mostly involves elderly and handicapped. The tribe's manufacturing plants, still going strong, consistently win high quality awards. They employ some 8,000 people, mostly non-Natives.

Most interestingly, a stroll down the reservation's main elementary school will reveal a lot of students speaking fluent Choctaw.

"Tell the other tribes" Martin says, "we can all do this. If you really want to do it, and get your act together, you can do it." This is a generous thought, but such progress will also require vision, and political acumen. To Martin's credit, when the political winds turned right in 1994, he was positioned to solidify friendships with such Republican powerhouses as Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss.

Hiring quality lobbyists as their new wealth allowed, the Choctaw leader persuaded a good sector of Republicans to the righteousness of the Native nations sovereignty from taxation. In particular, the Choctaw initiative convinced the country's major anti-tax organization—Americans for Tax Reform, whose 500-plus organizations network and 90,000 activists supported the Indian case as an anti-tax strategy.

Politics is the art of achieving your group's self-interest, and it certainly makes for diverse bedfellows. But always the proof is in the pudding. The Choctaw strategy, precise and proper for their geopolitical context, is pragmatically brilliant. In the hold of the old South, this Mississippi tribe provides a welcome signal, an example of where visionary leadership can make a huge difference to the future of a people. An appreciation and salutation is due Choctaw chief and statesman, Phillip Martin, visionary, quiet building, steady helm.

TRIBUTE TO MARK TOLBERT, JR.

HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 3, 2001

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mark Tolbert, Jr., a young man fatally injured in an automobile accident December 22. Affectionately known as "Marky," he was the oldest son of Bishop Mark Tolbert, Sr. and Mrs. Emelda Tolbert, pastor and First Lady of Christ Temple Church in Kansas City, Missouri. Marky was taken to heaven by a "chariot of fire" one month past his nineteenth birthday. Although Marky left us at a young age, he led a remarkable and inspiring life.

He had recently completed his first semester of college at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, majoring in Business Administration. He was looking forward to working during the semester break at a local sporting goods store, continuing the work ethic he developed at an early age by working after school and during the summer.

Marky had a genuine love for people, especially children. He coached an after school basketball team at Faxon Montessori School that went undefeated for two years. He was a tutor at the Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy Saturday School and by his counseling, guidance, and initiative served as a role model to the youth of our community. With his strong work ethic and love of God and family he was destined to make the world a better place.

Before Marky could walk, he was involved in Christ Temple Church, beginning by making "joyful noises" on the drums. He further developed his musical talents over the years and played the keyboard at Sunday morning services even during his first semester of college. He helped serve the homeless during the church's annual "Feed the Multitude" ministry. He was President of the New Generation Choir and a member of the Sunday School. Marky was a founding member of the Radical Praise Steppers, a group of youth who showed praise to their heavenly Father through dance routines that encompassed clapping, stepping and stomping in unison while singing praises to God. They performed at church, district councils, national conventions and community events.

I attended his funeral December 30 with over 800 people. So many mourners came that the overflow of almost 300 people had to be accommodated in the church basement to watch the service on large screen television. Senior Pentecostal Ministers from around the country spoke in praise of Marky's life and legacy. The eulogy was performed by a family friend, Bishop Norman L. Wagner, President of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. Bishop Wagner delivered a powerful, uplifting sermon from the Second Book of Kings of the Bible. He compared Marky with the prophet Elisha and ended his sermon by stating that "God had to send a chariot of fire to take him out." Those in the congregation as well as the grieving family felt their hearts lifted from sorrow to joy knowing that Marky's greatness would not be diminished by death.

Marky's memory will live on in all those whose lives he has touched. His is a loss felt by his family and congregation, and the greater Kansas City community. Marky's beacon of

light may be extinguished here on earth, but it glows brightly in heaven.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in expressing condolence to the Tolbert family for the loss of this very special child, and to paying tribute to the service he gave to family friends, church and community during his 19 years on this earth.

TRIBUTE TO DON H. COX

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 3, 2001

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I wish today to honor a distinguished public servant from my district in Imperial County, California. Don H. Cox retired on December 1, 2000 after serving for 12 years as a member of the Board of Directors for the Imperial Irrigation District (IID). He represented district 4, which includes the city of Brawley where he and his family reside.

Don was elected to the Board in 1988 and reelected in 1992 and 1996. He served as Board President in 1991 and 1997, and served as Vice-President in 1990, 1995, and 1996. Don also served on the District's Water, Budget, EPA, Geothermal, Salton Sea, Energy, and Salton Sea Emergency study groups. He was appointed by the Governor of California to serve as a director of the Regional Water Quality Control Board for the Colorado River area and also served as a member/director of the Colorado River Board of California, the IID Water Conservation Advisory Board, California Farm Water Coalition, and the Association of California Water Agencies' Water Rights Committee. I had the pleasure of working closely with Don through his leadership on the Salton Sea Authority since its inception in 1993.

Don served in the United States Navy during World War II and upon returning from the war, earned his degree in agriculture economics from the University of California, Berkeley. Following his studies, Don returned to the Imperial Valley to farm with his sons, which he has done for over 40 years. He is a past member of the Imperial Valley Vegetable Growers Association and was involved with many cotton boards. Despite his recent retirement, Don remains involved in the farming community as a newly elected member of the Board of Directors of the Imperial County Farm Bureau.

Don has been a member of the Brawley Rotary Club for over 30 years, a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks-Lodge #1420 for over 40 years and a lifelong member of the Imperial Valley Navy League. He has also served his community as a member of the Brawley Union High School Quarterback Club.

Throughout my many years in Congress, I have valued Don's insight into, and knowledge of, the many important issues facing the IID and the farming community in the Imperial Valley. It is my distinct privilege to honor my distinguished friend.

FAIRNESS AND EQUITY FOR FEDERAL RETIREES WITH PART-TIME SERVICE

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 3, 2001

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today, I am reintroducing legislation to correct a longstanding inequity that affects a great number of Federal retirees in my district and throughout the Nation who have served for a portion of their careers in a part-time capacity. I am pleased that Mr. DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. WYNN, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. GILMAN have joined me as original co-sponsors of this important legislation.

The current retirement formula for Federal workers with part-time service was enacted by Congress in 1986 as a provision of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) (P.L. 99-272). For the most part, the reforms contained in COBRA were fair. They ensured an equitable calculation for all employees hired after 1986 and prevented part-time employees from gaming the system in order to receive a disproportionately higher benefit. The 1986 reforms were based on a procedure developed and recommended to the Congress by the General Accounting Office (GAO). In a nutshell, the new methodology determines the proportion of a full-time career that a part-time employee works and scales annuities accordingly. Under the formula, a part-time worker's salary is calculated on a full-time equivalent basis (FTE) for retirement purposes. Thus, a worker's "high-three salary" could occur during a period of part-time service. This often happens when a senior level worker cuts back on his or her hours to care for an ill spouse or deal with other personal matters. Many of the people in this situation are women.

The problem is that the 1986 law had unintended and often unfair consequences for workers hired before 1986 who have some part-time service after 1986. Specifically, according to the way the law has been implemented by OPM, some part-time workers are not able to apply their full-time equivalent (FTE) salary to pre-1986 employment. This effectively limits their ability to receive the advantage of their "high-three average" salary for their entire careers. The reason for this inequity can be traced to subsection (c) of Section 15204 of COBRA. It provides that the new formula shall be effective with respect to service performed "on or after the date of the enactment of this Act."

Whether this was a drafting error, or whether OPM has taken an unnecessarily restrictive reading of the statute is hard to determine. What is clear is that the current practice is plainly contrary to the intent of the Congress, which was to grandfather existing employees into the new system and to ensure that no Federal workers would be harmed by changes in the retirement formula.

In a letter dated February 19, 1987 to then-OPM Director Constance Horner, the Chairman of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, The Honorable William D. Ford, objected to this anomalous and unfair result. He wrote:

As in many other instances involving benefits, Congress chose to protect or to "grandfather" past service—to apply the new benefit